

## Andrew Jackson to Martin Van Buren, May 18, 1829, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

### TO SECRETARY VAN BUREN.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Handwriting of A. J. Donelson, signed by Jackson.

Washington, May 18, 1829.

The dress of an American Minister as fixed by the mission to Ghent,<sup>2</sup> and adopted by the Department of State being extremely ostentatious and probably equal in expense to one eighteenth part of the outfit allowed to a minister of the highest grade, the order prescribing it is henceforth abrogated. But as it is considered necessary that our ministers should be distinguished by their dress while at Foreign courts from unofficial personages, I am willing to prescribe one which shall conform to the simplicity of our government founded upon, and guided as it is, by pure republican principles.

<sup>2</sup> Memorandum printed in Moore, *Digest*, IV. 761. Van Buren's circular issued in pursuance of the present letter is *ibid.*, pp. 762–763.

I therefore direct when the minister thinks proper to wear a court dress, that it shall be a Black coat with a gold star on each side of the collar near its termination—the under clothes to be black or white at the option of the wearer—a three cornered Chapeau de Bras, a black cockade and eagle, and a steel mounted sword with a white scabbard<sup>3</sup>

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3 In the draft the coat and nether garments were to be blue, and American artillery buttons were to be used. But the text shows that “black” was substituted for “blue”, and the allusion to the buttons was omitted. Ed.